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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY.

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PREDATORY ANIMAL CONTROL IN WYOMING  
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STILL HUNTING METHODS FOR  
GRAY WOLVES AND COYOTES.



Suggestions to Hunters.

The success of a hunter depends mainly upon the care exercised in keeping equipment in first-class working order. The following points are essential and should be adhered to if the hunter expects results in rifle work:

1. A gun must be kept thoroughly cleaned and well oiled to prevent rust when not in use. If a gun is shot off during the day's hunt, it should be cleaned immediately after supper.

2. After a day's hunt it is advisable to run at least one oiled rag through the gun, whether it was fired or not, and before starting on the next trip the oil should be wiped out.

3. Guns must be well sighted up before starting on a hunting trip. If necessary, use a box or two of cartridges in targeting. The best results in targeting a gun are obtained by pasting a regulation-sized target on a box about 3 feet square and placing it at a distance of from 80 to 100 yards. If the hunter can group his shots within a four inch circle with a dead rest, his gun is working well enough for any kind of game hunting. The time spent in this way is essential and well worth while. A rifle that shoots wildly results in waste of ammunition, causes the hunter to lose confidence in himself, and scares animals and makes it harder to get a shot at them later.

Good Practice.

In view of the fact that the muscles of the arms must be developed to act promptly and with steadiness, it is very important that the hunter who has had little or no practice in shooting should develop these muscles by looking through the sights of his gun and aiming at something. If a man can throw his gun to his shoulder and take a sight on some object, say 10 times each day for two weeks before going on a hunting trip, the accuracy attained in shooting will be surprising. This practice is less expensive and almost as good as real shooting, and is essential for good results in shooting off-hand for people who have not had a chance to do much actual hunting.



### Position for Off-hand Shooting.

In order to become proficient in off-hand shooting, take a firm grip on the stock of the gun immediately back of the magazine and let the other hand slide out to the end of the forearm. Place the feet at least 20 inches apart to balance the body firmly, and you are ready to take aim.

If possible, the hunter should teach himself to shoot with both eyes open, as men who use both eyes are invariably the best shots.

### Best Shots at Animals.

The following, in the order of their importance, are the main shots that a hunter frequently is confronted with:

1. A standing quartering, straightaway, or broadside shot.
2. A running animal quartering away from.
3. A running straight away from.
4. A running broadside shot.

Most hunters think that a running broadside shot is better than a quartering or straight away shot, but it is not. Most shots are high or low and do not vary much to the right or left. If you have the long way of your animal to work on up and down, your chances are much greater for success than if you have the narrow width of the animal.

### Judging Distances.

It is very essential to the inexperienced hunter to learn to judge distance. He should guess 100 yards and then pace it off and see how near his guess was. Then guess 200 yards and pace it off and so on up to 300 yards. This should be repeated several times. When a man who possesses the other qualifications gets so he can guess within 10 yards a distance of from 100 to 300 yards he will soon be able to master the art of successful hunting.

### Summer Hunting.

1. During the hot weather from July 1 to September 30, wolves do not travel much, nor go beyond the nearest rough or brushy country after they have made a killing.

2. From 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. during the hot summer days, the wolf seeks the shadiest and coolest nook in the badlands, in some deep wash. He usually stays there and sleeps till nightfall.



3. Immediately upon hearing of depredations, the hunter should ride to the scene of the killing. After determining in what direction the wolves have gone, which can usually be done very easily by tracing out the main trails (generally heading for the mouth of a nearby draw), the hunter should try to get a shot at them. As they stay near their kill, they will not likely be more than three miles away, and may be as near as half a mile, in some rough and brushy place.

4. If the hunter is reasonably sure that he will jump the wolves within one or two miles, with the wind in his favor, he should take up the chase on foot, as a horse makes so much noise that the result is likely to be a long-range shot, which of course lessens the chance of success. Before the hunter takes up the trail on foot, he should put scent on the soles of his shoes, and thus avoid leaving human scent to scare away the wolves, in case he does not get them immediately.

5. As the wolf will, beyond doubt, be lying beneath a bank on the shady side of the wash in the bottom of the gulch, the hunter should also travel on the side which affords the shade, but close to the bank. If he travels up the bottom of the wash, too much time will be spent in scrambling out to where he can get a shot, and the wolf will probably escape.

6. When branches of the main draw have been reached, special care should be exercised to find which way the wolf has gone. If this is impossible, owing to fresh trails going up each branch, each tributary should be thoroughly hunted from the mouth to the very head. This should be repeated as the hunter progresses to the head of the main drainage. Never begin at the head of a draw and hunt down stream, as animals will invariably run down the bottom of the wash till they are out of gunshot range before they swing out. If forced to run up grade they will almost always swing out of the wash immediately after being jumped, and will cut across country at right angles to the drainage, furnishing excellent broadside shots.

7. Wolves instinctively become aware of a hunter's presence, sometimes long before they can be seen, and then will invariably make a run for their lives by jumping up from 30 to 50 yards ahead of the hunter. In this respect, the wolf differs from the coyote; the coyote usually lies quiet and lets the hunter pass on before he moves. It seems that he realizes that his natural coloring gives him greater protection in most surroundings than does that of the wolf. For this reason, a man must keep a much closer watch for coyotes than for wolves. A wolf will depend much more on his cunning to get him out of tight places, and does not seem to have the faith in protective resemblance that the coyote has.

8. During windy and stormy days coyotes frequently crawl into holes in the banks of washes or along creeks. A wolf hook has proved to be very useful in pulling them out.



Fall Hunting.

1. From October 1 to December 31, the cooler weather causes wolves to start traveling long distances, frequently as far as fifty miles in one night. They usually travel in packs at this season of the year if there are any neighboring wolves within a radius of 50 or 60 miles. Their places for slaughtering stock are usually considerable distances apart, which renders the still hunting method useless to the average hunter in trying to get these animals by trailing and shooting. However, if a hunter finds that they have fed heavily where they have made a killing, it is advisable to follow them at least ten miles, as very frequently after a feast they will go into the nearest rough country and go to sleep on the sunny side of some hill.

2. A pair of field glasses are very helpful in locating wolves at this season of the year.

Winter Hunting.

1. From December 1 to March 31, the wolves usually travel in pairs. January and February are the main months of mating, and March is spent in locating and cleaning out places that will be used for denning. It is useless for the hunter to follow wolves during March unless he understands his business thoroughly and is a good shot.

2. The pups are usually born between March 16 and April 15, but it is not advisable to begin den hunting until April 1, as very often the wolves would be scared away before the pups are born.

Spring Hunting.

1. April 1 to May 15, without fail, should be spent in den hunting. The old wolves can almost always be taken by following this method:

(a) When the hunter has located the den, which is usually done before he gets within 300 or 400 yards of it, he rides by without getting off his horse, and immediately begins to devise ways and means to get the old wolves as they come and go from the den. Some secluded spot 200 or 300 yards from the den should be located if possible; watching here morning and evening will bring the hunter within gunshot range of the wolves without their knowledge. Sometimes it is necessary to spend a week or more here, but if the hunter can get the wolves in that period it is time well spent.

(b) Make certain each day that the pups are in the den, as the old wolves will move them at the first sign of danger.



(c) When the old wolves have been taken, it is a matter of little work to get the pups; as a rule, they may be taken by digging them out, or traps may be fastened to poles and shoved into the den. Usually, even the baby wolves are of such a fierce disposition that they will snap at the traps, and then you have them.

2. In sections where high bounties are paid by stock associations for wolves, the Government hunter is forced to take the pups from the den as soon as he locates it, as if he doesn't, someone else does. In this event, about 50 traps should be strung out in trails, with scent sets radiating for a mile from the den. If this method is followed, the old wolves are almost always caught in a week or ten days, as they have been known to visit the old den site as long as a month after their pups were taken.

General Hints.

1. Don't shoot at anything unless you know absolutely what it is. It might be a human being.

2. Don't shoot because you see brush or timber moving, or something black. It might be a man coming.

3. Don't shoot off into space with high powered rifles as there is danger of killing people, and it frequently happens that live stock are killed or crippled.

4. Don't point a gun toward people. It is the "SUPPOSED TO BE EMPTY GUN" that has caused the loss of many human lives.

5. Don't fail to remove the cartridge from the chamber after you have failed to get the anticipated shot at game.

6. Don't fail to keep the safety on when your gun is loaded. This is a protection to your own life as well as to that of others.

7. Don't hang a gun up in a house in a leather scabbard unless it is first oiled and wrapped in cloth of some kind. The bare scabbard sweats the gun and causes rust to form in the barrel.

Remarks.

1. An automatic rifle of about 25 gauge, mounted with telescope sights, and using a high power ammunition, is probably the best gun for coyote and wolf work. Such a gun usually retails for about \$55.00, plus the cost of the telescope.



2. If hunters belong to or will join the National Rifle Association, the 30 Krag Model 1906 carbine rifle may be purchased for \$10.00, and the long barrel rifle for \$6.00 each. Cartridges for this gun from the same source will cost \$2.50 per hundred. This gun can be used for big-game hunting as well as for small game, and is probably the cheapest and best all-around firearm equipment that can be purchased.

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